Western Economic Diversification Canada | Diversification de l'économie de l'Ouest Canada

Access to Information Act

Western Economic Diversification Canada
Annual Report to Parliament
April 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006

Canada

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Introduction

The *Access to Information Act* took effect on July 1, 1983, to give Canadian citizens, permanent residents and any person and corporation present in Canada a right of access to information contained in government records, subject to certain specific and limited exceptions.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) was established in 1987 to help lessen the West's economic dependence on natural resources. Under the *Western Diversification Act, 1988*, the Department is mandated to "promote the development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada and to advance the interests of Western Canada in national economic policy, program and project development and implementation."

Section 72 of the *Access to Information Act* requires the head of every government institution to submit an annual report to Parliament on the administration of the *Act*. This report details how WD administered its responsibilities under the *Act* during the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

2005-2006 Highlights and Accomplishments

Western Economic Diversification Canada's number of Access to Information requests increased slightly in the 2005-2006 fiscal year, up to 40 from 32 in the 2004-2005 fiscal year. This remains substantially lower than the number of ATIP requests received in 2003-2004.
The Department updated its internal ATIP Procedures Manual, and provided copies to Regional ATIP Liaison Officers, and included this information on its internet web site, providing access to information about the *Act* and the departmental procedures to all WD staff.

Three requestors were noticeable this past fiscal year, accounting for 47.5% of all requests received by the Department in 2005-2006. One applicant submitted a total of 11 requests for contracting information; another applicant submitted five (5) requests concerning federal funding for Saskatoon centennial projects; and a third applicant interested in the Manitoba Red River floodway submitted three (3) requests. In addition, one WD request was also impacted by a court application regarding the Port of Prince Rupert.

Copies of this report may be obtained from:

Access to Information and Privacy Coordinator
Western Economic Diversification Canada
Suite 1500, Canada Place
9700 Jasper Avenue N.W.
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 4H7

Background on the Department

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) was established in 1987 to help lessen the West's (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) economic dependence on natural resources. Under the *Western Economic Diversification Act, 1988*, the Department is mandated to "promote the development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada and to advance the interests of Western Canada in national economic policy, program and project development and implementation." To do this, WD organizes its programs and services to achieve the following strategic outcomes:

- policies and programs that support the development of Western Canada (policy, advocacy and coordination);
- economically viable communities in Western Canada with a high quality of life (sustainable communities); and
- a competitive and expanded business sector in Western Canada and a strengthened western Canadian innovation system (entrepreneurship and innovation).

WD's strategic investments in these areas will help to fulfill WD's vision of ***a stronger West, a stronger Canada***.

WD's Headquarters is co-located in Edmonton with the Alberta Region office. There are also regional offices located in Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Vancouver, and a liaison office located in Ottawa. Regional satellite offices also exist in Calgary, Regina and Victoria.

The Deputy Minister is located in Edmonton, with Assistant Deputy Ministers located in each of the regional offices and Ottawa. Each regional Assistant Deputy Ministers is responsible for the delivery of programs and services in their region that support the Department's strategic outcomes, as well as corporate responsibilities.

WD continues to work closely with Infrastructure Canada, Industry Canada and other regional development organizations.

For additional information on the Department's activities, visit www.wd.gc.ca.

Access to Information and Privacy Unit

For the purposes of the *Access to Information Act*, the Minister delegated all her powers, authorities and responsibilities to the Access to Information and Privacy Coordinator who is accountable for the development, coordination and implementation of effective policies, guidelines, systems and procedures to ensure the Minister's responsibilities under the *Act* are met and to enable appropriate processing and proper disclosure of information. The Coordinator is also responsible for related policies, systems and procedures emanating from the *Act*.

In 2005-2006, two officers processed requests on behalf of the Department and assisted the Coordinator.

The activities of WD's Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) unit include:

- processing requests under the *Act*;
- representing WD in dealings with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, the Information Commissioner and other government departments and agencies regarding the application of the *Act* as it relates to WD;
- responding to consultations submitted by other federal institutions on WD documents under consideration for release;
- preparing annual reports to Parliament and other statutory reporting requirements, as well as other material that may be required by central agencies;
- developing and maintaining policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure the *Act* is respected by WD;
- promoting awareness of the *Act* within the Department to ensure responsiveness to the obligations imposed on the government; and
- monitoring departmental compliance with the *Act*, regulations and relevant procedures and policies.

Departmental Policies and Procedures

In September 2005, WD updated its internal ATIP Procedures Manual, including numerous reference documents and other tools. Hard copies of the manual were provided to the Regional ATIP Liaison Officers for their use. Much of the information is also available on the Department's intranet web site, providing staff with access to information to help them respond to requests.

Access to Information Training and Awareness

During the fiscal year 2005-2006, two WD officers attended the national Access to Information and Privacy Conference held in Edmonton, Alberta. One officer works specifically in the Access to Information and Privacy Unit, and the second is a Regional ATIP Liaison Officer in the Ottawa office.

Access to Information and Privacy awareness sessions for staff have been planned for the new fiscal year, 2006-2007.

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

REPORT ON THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT
RAPPORT CONCERNANT LA LOI SUR L'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION

Institution	Reporting period / Période visée par le rapport
WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANADA DIVERSIFICATION DE L'ÉCONOMIE DE L'OUEST CANADA	4/1/2005 to/à 3/31/2006

Source	Media / Médias	Academia / Secteur universitaire	Business / Secteur commercial	Organization / Organisme	Public
	7	0	14	4	15

I Requests under the Access to Information Act / Demandes en vertu de la Loi sur l'accès à l'information

Received during reporting period / Reçues pendant la période visée par le rapport	40
Outstanding from previous period / En suspens depuis la période antérieure	6
TOTAL	46
Completed during reporting period / Traitées pendant la période visée par le rapport	38
Carried forward / Reportées	8

II Disposition of requests completed / Disposition à l'égard des demandes traitées

1	All disclosed / Communication totale	6	6	Unable to process / Traitement impossible	5
2	Disclosed in part / Communication partielle	18	7	Abandoned by applicant / Abandon de la demande	4
3	Nothing disclosed (excluded) / Aucune communication (exclusion)	5	8	Treated informally / Traitement non officiel	0
4	Nothing disclosed (exempt) / Aucune communication (exemption)	0	TOTAL		38
5	Transferred / Transmission	0			

III Exemptions invoked / Exemptions invoquées

S. Art. 13(1)(a)	0	S. Art. 16(1)(a)	0	S. Art. 19(b)	0	S. Art. 21(1)(a)	3
(b)	0	(b)	0	(c)	0	(b)	6
(c)	0	(c)	0	(d)	0	(c)	3
(d)	4	(d)	0	S. Art. 19(1)	18	(d)	0
S. Art. 14	7	S. Art. 16(2)	0	S. Art. 20(1)(a)	0	S. Art. 22	1
S. Art. 15(1) International rel. / Relations internationales	0	S. Art. 16(3)	0	(b)	12	S. Art. 23	2
Defence / Défense	0	S. Art. 17	0	(c)	2	S. Art. 24	0
Subversive activities / Activités subversives	0	S. Art. 18(a)	1	(d)	0	S. Art. 26	0

IV Exclusions cited / Exclusions citées

S. Art. 68(a)	5	S. Art. 68(1)(c)	0
(b)	0	(d)	0
(c)	0	(e)	1
S. Art. 69(1)(a)	0	(f)	0
(b)	0	(g)	2

V Completion time / Délai de traitement

30 days or under / 30 jours ou moins	19
31 to 60 days / De 31 à 60 jours	6
61 to 120 days / De 61 à 120 jours	12
121 days or over / 121 jours et plus	1

VI Extensions / Prorogations des délais

	30 days or under / 30 jours ou moins	31 days or over / 31 jours ou plus
Searching / Recherche	1	0
Consultation	8	0
Third party / Tiers	2	9
TOTAL	11	9

VII Translations / Traductions

Translations requested / Traductions demandées		0
Translations prepared / Traductions préparées	English to French / De l'anglais au français	0
	French to English / Du français à l'anglais	0

VIII Method of access / Méthode de communication

Copies given / Copies de l'original	21
Examination / Examen de l'original	0
Copies and examination / Copies et examen	3

IX Fees / Frais

Net fees collected / Frais nets perçus			
Application fees / Frais de la demande	$115.00	Preparation / Préparation	$0.00
Reproduction	$94.40	Computer processing / Traitement informatique	$0.00
Searching / Recherche	$0.00	TOTAL	$209.40

Fees waived / Dispense de frais	No. of times / Nombre de fois	$
$25.00 or under / 25 $ ou moins	17	$85.00
Over $25.00 / De plus de 25 $	0	$0.00

X Costs / Coûts

Financial (all reasons) / Financiers (raisons)	($000)
Salary / Traitement	75,700.0
Administration (O and M) / Administration (fonctionnement et maintien)	29,000.0
TOTAL	104,700.0

Person year utilization (all reasons) / Années-personnes utilisées (raisons)	
Person year (decimal format) / Années personnes (nombre décimal)	1.38

Interpretation of the Statistical Report

a) Requests Received Under the *Access to Information Act*

Between April 1, 2005, and March 31, 2006, WD received 40 requests for information under the *Access to Information Act*. In total, 38 were completed during the reporting period. It should be noted that six (6) requests were outstanding from the previous fiscal year, and eight (8) requests were carried forward in the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

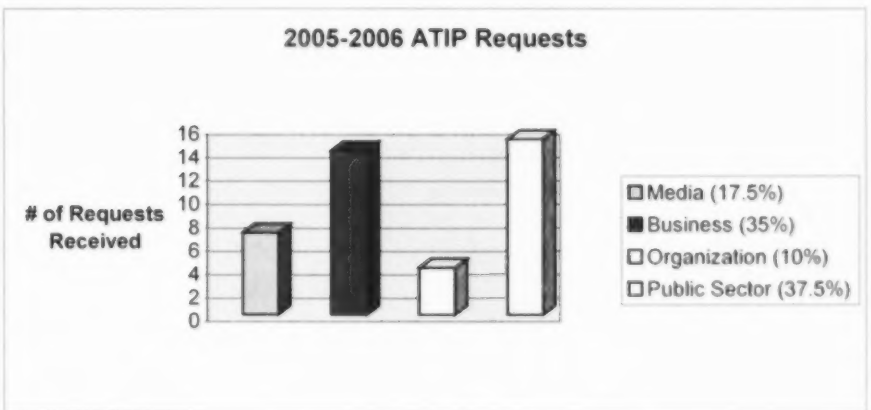
WD also received 44 Access to Information consultations from other departments or organizations, up from only 26 in 2004-2005. The department also received four (4) informal requests.

b) Trends of the Requests Received

The breakdown of the requests received during the 2005-2006 fiscal year is as follows:

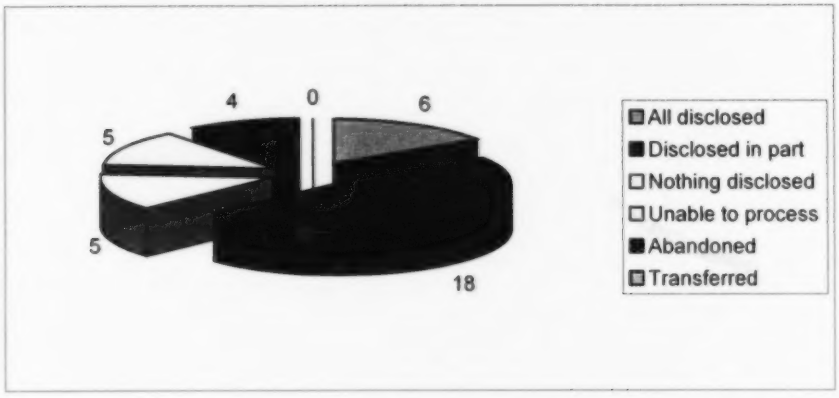
- fifteen (15) or 37.5% from the general public/public sector;
- fourteen (14) or 35% from business, which includes lawyers (12) and business (2);
- seven (7) or 17.5% from the media; and
- four (4) or 10% from organizations, which were all from political parties.

By comparison, in 2004-2005 the majority of requests were received equally from business and the public sector (28% each).



c) Disposition of Requests Completed

In 2005-2006, WD completed 38 requests. The breakdown of the disposition is as follows:



d) Exemptions Invoked

This section of the Statistical Report is intended to identify the number of requests where specific types of exemptions were invoked to deny access. For example, if in processing a request, five different exemptions were applied by WD, one exemption under each relevant section would be reported for a total of five. If the same exemption is claimed several times for the same request, it is reported only once.

WD involved exemptions under sections 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 of the *Act*.

Subsections 19(1) and 20(1) were the provisions most commonly invoked to withhold personal information and third party information.

e) Exclusions Cited

The *Act* does not apply to confidences of the Queen's Privy Council pursuant to Section 69.

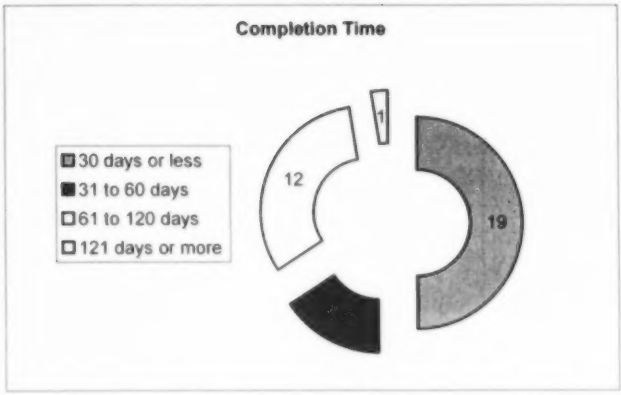
During this reporting period, Section 69 was invoked on five (5) occasions.

f) Extensions of Time Limits

Section 9 of the *Act* provides for the extension of the statutory time limits if consultations are necessary or the request is for a large volume of records and processing the request within the original time limit would unreasonably interfere with the operations of the Department.

During this reporting period, 11 requests were extended for 30 days or less, and nine (9) requests required an extension for more than 30 days.

g) Completion Time



h) Method of Access

Access to the relevant documents was given, in whole or in part, for 21 requests. On three (3) occasions, the requestor chose to come into the office and examined the material before taking any copies.

i) Fees

The fees collected during the reporting period totalled $209.40. During the same period, WD waived application fees on 19 requests for a total of $85.00.

j) Costs and Organizational Changes

Total salary costs associated with the *Access to Information Act* are estimated at $75,700 for 2005-2006. Other costs amounted to $29,000, for a total of $104,700. Because of the difficulty of collecting complete time costs from responsibility centres, the aforementioned figures are underestimated. The associated employee resources for 2005-2006 are fixed at 1.38 full-time equivalent (FTE) for administering the *Act*.

Complaints and Investigations

In 2005-2006, WD received no complaints pursuant to the *Act*. However, two (2) complaints are still under review from the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 fiscal years.

Appeals to the Court

Western Economic Diversification Canada continues to process and work with Justice Canada in response to a formal request for judicial review received in the 2003-2004 reporting period.

WD received a request under the *Access to Information Act* for records pertaining to the 44 financial assistance contributions totaling $11,126,414 that were written-off by the Minister in 2002-2003. One of the third parties involved, Washtronics Ltd., objected to the disclosure of any of their information submitted to the Department and applied for a judicial review to the Federal Court of Canada in accordance with Section 44 of the *Act*. The outcome of this matter will be reported when this matter is resolved.